

TLG Reading

Empress Road, Calcot, Reading, Berkshire RG31 4XR

Inspection dates

10–12 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school with great determination. She has high aspirations for pupils and staff alike.
- Staff work well as a team. Partnerships are strong. This impacts positively on the quality of education provided at the school.
- Leaders, including members of the management committee, have created a strong culture of tolerance and respect at the school.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It is very bespoke in nature, with the key aim of enabling pupils to re-engage with learning after unsuccessful experiences in the past.
- Staff plan learning to match pupils' personal interests as far as possible. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their time at the school.
- Leaders track pupils' progress in mathematics and English well. However, leaders do not have sufficient information to fully assess pupils' progress in other areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is effective. Promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils is afforded the highest priority by all staff.
- Relationships between the school and other professional services are strong. Parents and carers feel supported by staff and value the care their children receive at school.
- Pastoral care is strong. Staff understand pupils' vulnerabilities and work hard to break down the barriers to learning that many of them have.
- Most pupils have a strong desire to behave well and succeed, although some struggle to make this a reality because of their complex needs.
- Leaders' systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning need to be strengthened.
- Staff are not consistent in their expectation of pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and rationalise systems to assess the quality of teaching and learning so that leaders and those in positions of governance have a more accurate understanding of the quality of provision, and staff know what to do to improve their classroom practice.
- Develop an effective system to assess pupils' progress across the wider curriculum.
- Raise expectations of pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads by example and has a clear vision for the school. She is totally dedicated to her work and ambitious for pupils to succeed. She understands the complex needs of pupils well. Parents are very positive about her tireless work to support their children to re-engage with education and to become successful learners once more.
- Partnerships between the headteacher and the two other members of staff are positive. Communication is strong. Consequently, relationships are constructive and the school is a happy and welcoming place, which impacts positively on the well-being of pupils.
- Mutual respect and tolerant attitudes are at the heart of the culture of the school, which is founded on the Christian ethos of the proprietors. Staff are open and honest with each other. They are reflective and not afraid to ask each other for help or support when needed. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has remained good over time.
- The curriculum suits the individual needs of pupils well. Staff work hard to plan learning that interests and engages pupils. Much of the learning is closely linked to real-life experiences. One of the key aims of the curriculum is to enable pupils to re-engage with learning. Staff are successful in making this a reality, especially for pupils who stay at the school for longer periods of time.
- Staff know that building pupils' confidence and self-esteem is an important aspect of their work, especially for those pupils who have had poor educational experiences prior to joining the school. As a result, pupils view their learning experiences positively, including their trips into the local community, learning to use public transport and buying goods from local shops.
- The use of technology has become a key aspect of the curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils use laptops and tablets as tools to access learning on a daily basis. This includes their work in mathematics and English and when carrying out their own research in different subject areas.
- Pupils enjoy learning about the lifestyles and cultures of others and what it means to live in modern Britain. The school day often begins with discussions about national and international news and current affairs. Discussions also focus on relationships and equalities, exploring different topics such as racism and the similarities and differences between different world faiths.
- Other professionals, including representatives of different local authorities and senior members of staff of other schools who broker short- or long-term placements for their pupils, view the bespoke nature of provision at the school positively. Successful partnerships with other schools and educational professionals are also helping the headteacher develop the school's curriculum further.
- Staff monitor pupils' progress in mathematics and English well. However, assessment of pupils' achievements in other subjects is underdeveloped. Leaders have already identified this as an area to improve but understand the need to act with more urgency to develop this aspect of provision.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not as effective as it could

be. A more systematic and timely approach is needed to enable leaders and the management committee to have a clearer picture of the quality of education at the school. Importantly, it will also allow staff to have a better understanding of the strengths and areas to develop in their own classroom practice.

Governance

- Members of the management committee know the school well. Collectively, they ensure that the school is a safe place to be, that the quality of education is good and that all of the independent school standards are met. The chair of the management committee also acts on behalf of the proprietor. Other members represent TLG, a national Christian charity which works in partnership with the proprietor to oversee the school. Although the management committee is small, all aspects of governance are carried out effectively.
- Committee members understand the need to maintain a strategic overview of the quality of provision. However, the management committee has not had a clear enough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning at the school in the recent past. As a consequence, it is not as effective as it could be in holding the headteacher to account for improving the school further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The culture to keep pupils safe is strong at this school. Policies, procedures and systems to keep pupils safe are fit for purpose. This includes the safeguarding policy, which follows current guidance and is published on the school's website.
- Staff are vigilant and knowledgeable about a wide range of potential risks pupils face, including online grooming and other key issues faced by young people nationally. Staff take their responsibilities seriously and know what to do if they have concerns. Their training is up to date and communication between the school and other professionals is strong. Pupils feel safe at school. Parents who talked to the inspector were very positive about how staff care for their children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and support staff know pupils very well. Despite the high level of pupils' complex needs and the tension this causes in the classroom, staff are successful at providing good-quality learning experiences tailored to the needs of each individual.
- Detailed baseline assessments of pupils are carried out on entry. These enable staff to build a clear picture of the strengths of new joiners as quickly as possible. Profiles are built using a wide range of information so that staff are well informed and better able to provide the academic support pupils require.
- Staff are dedicated and determined. They go out of their way to counter the low self-esteem displayed by many pupils. Building pupils' confidence is a daily requirement. Planning opportunities that promote success in learning, while providing pupils with the right level of challenge, is a constant balancing act which staff accomplish very well most of the time. One pupil told the inspector: 'The work we get is not easy, it is manageable, but pitched in the "grey area" between too easy and too hard.'

- The questioning skills of staff are well developed. At its best, feedback to pupils, including verbal prompts or carefully targeted questions, enables them to make connections with previous learning and understand more easily what they need to do to improve their work.
- On occasion, staff are not as consistent in applying the school's behaviour policy as they might be. When this is the case, learning slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Teaching and support staff are highly aware of the complex needs of individual pupils. As a result, promoting the personal development and emotional well-being of pupils is afforded a high profile at all times. Levels of supervision are high. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly good, although some find that their negative experiences in previous schools present barriers to engaging fully. Staff work hard to overcome these difficulties. Consequently, most pupils want to learn and they slowly come to terms with the fact that they can be successful again.
- Pupils are very aware of the potential dangers of using the internet and social media. Because of the high level of supervision and good relationships with staff, pupils are able to discuss their personal worries with members of staff they trust. One pupil told the inspector that bullying is not a problem because the school is small and staff would not let it happen.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because of the nurturing environment it provides for them. Pupils disapprove when poor behaviour disrupts their learning. Consequently, most pupils try hard to moderate their behaviour and conduct themselves well when they feel anxious or frustrated.
- Staff generally deal with poor behaviour appropriately but, occasionally, expectations are not high enough, leading to some pupils disrupting learning. On balance, pupils apply themselves well but the school's behaviour policy needs to be used with more consistency by staff so that pupils understand more clearly where the boundaries are.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is monitored well by leaders. Absence is rarely an issue. However, when a concern is evident, leaders work well with families and other professionals to ensure that everything is done to offer appropriate support to improve the situation.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils make good progress from their very varied starting points. This is particularly

the case in mathematics and English, where some pupils make rapid gains within a short period of time after starting at the school.

- When pupils join the school, baseline assessments of their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and English are comprehensive and accurate. Teachers use this information to plan learning which addresses the substantial gaps many pupils have. As a result, pupils' work shows good progress over time. This is especially the case for pupils who have been at the school for longer periods of time.
- Measuring pupils' progress and identifying gaps in their knowledge in subjects other than mathematics and English are underdeveloped. As a result, staff are less effective at planning learning that is pitched at the right level for different pupils across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders measure outcomes in more ways than just pupils' academic progress. However, their expectation is that pupils will make progress in a range of subjects, even if the steps in progress are small.
- Pupils generally stay at the school for short periods of time. At the time of the inspection, few had been at the school for longer than a year, with most being there for only a matter of months. Leaders aim to re-integrate pupils back into mainstream education as soon as possible. Some pupils are successful at gaining places in local colleges after leaving the school at the end of Year 11.

School details

Unique reference number	136706
DfE registration number	869/6201
Inspection number	10047022

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	12 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	The Gate
Chair	Gareth Owen
Headteacher	Rachel Owen
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,520
Telephone number	01189 432 978
Website	www.tlgreading.org.uk
Email address	rachel.owen@tlg.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–14 May 2015

Information about this school

- TLG Reading is an independent day school which caters for pupils between 12 and 16 years of age. The school has a Christian ethos and is registered for up to 18 pupils. There are currently eight pupils on roll.
- Most pupils have an education, health and care plan specifying behavioural or social and emotional difficulties. Many have histories of severely disrupted schooling. Some have not attended education for long periods of time prior to joining the school.
- Governance is provided by a small management committee. Members of the management committee include the headteacher and representatives of the proprietor and TLG, a

national Christian charity which employs all staff and manages the school.

- The school was last inspected in May 2015, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were found to be met.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out a series of classroom visits during the inspection. These included opportunities to observe the start and finish of the school day. During classroom visits, the inspector assessed pupils' work and talked to them about their learning.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at break and lunchtime and at the start and finish of the school day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, who was sometimes accompanied by the head of teaching and learning for TLG or the centre support manager. Meetings were also held with two members of staff, as well as with two pupils. Separate telephone conversations were held with representatives of Bracknell and Slough local authorities and the inclusion manager of a referring school. A meeting was held with the chair of the management committee (who represented the proprietor), accompanied by another member of the management committee.
- Two responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were considered, as were two responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire and accompanying free-text messages. The inspector also talked to two parents on the telephone.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, records and policies, including those regarding safeguarding and other aspects of the independent school standards. Minutes of meetings of the management committee, the school's own self-evaluation and development planning, and information about pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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